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ABSTRACT

This report presents findings from four studies of adolescent behavior in high schools. A basic assumption was that organization structure has strong effects on behavior. The authors concluded that the large comprehensive high school's organization structure with emphasis on teacher initiated action, routine batch processing, and reliance on maintenance procedures creates a lot of time when students are required to do little more than be present. They use this time to carry on informal small-group activities. The organizational structure helps to keep these small groups separated. The student behavior in turn affects these organizations giving them a "low level of existence" or a lack of vitality, limited ability to control behavior, and inability to recognize or tolerate conflict. In contrast, the authors found that the organization of a small alternative high school produced more involvement in school activities, less class cutting, and fewer discipline problems. This organization possessed a "high level of existence" or vitality and ability to tolerate conflict. Contributing to the success of the organization were face-to-face interaction, commonness of purpose, and student freedom. In spite of advantages, the authors concluded that larger traditional schools would find the alternative program too radical for widespread adoption. (Author/JM)

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ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND STUDENT BEHAVIOR IN SECONDARY SCHOOL

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INTRODUCTION

There is a great deal of current interest in the organizational structure of comprehensive, secondary schools which serve a variety of educational offerings to large and frequently diverse student populations. This interest has been generated by such events and ideas as the general alarm over the widely-publicized, racial disorders among students, the federal emphasis on "practical" or career education, blue-ribbon reports suggesting that these schools have "isolated" students from the mainstream of American society, and perhaps most important, a feeling of disillusion with largeness and a corresponding desire to return to smaller, more communal forms of school organization.[1]

Because of this current interest, we wish to first present some descriptions of adolscent behavior in secondary schools which we gathered from four separate studies, and secondly we want to explore the reciprocal relationships between that behavior and the organizational structure of those schools. Our assumption about these relationships is basic to organizational literature. It is: that organizational structures are never neutral, but rather within their prescribed roles, decision making processes, technology, patterns of communication and even their unintended effects, they create the situation within which participants develop thier ways of behaving and believing. We believe that much of the behavior exhibited by students and even teachers in schools can be explained in terms of the organizational structure of those schools.

There are four studies that will be considered in this paper. The first is entitled Inside High School, which Cusick researched in 1970; the second is a study of black-white student interaction in a large urban school, which Cusick and Ayling researched in 1972; the third is a study by Palonsky (1974), focusing on innovative practices in a comprehensive high school; and the fourth is a study by Martin (1975) of an alternative education program within a comprehensive

secondary school.[2]

All of these studies were undertaken with the methodology of participant observation, in which the researchers, for periods of from six to nine months, took on roles approximating, as closely as possible, that of students in the subject school. Each study asked similar, fundamental questions about the nature of student activity in the schools, i.e. what do students "do" all day? How are student groups formed? What is the nature of the interactions between students and students, students and groups, and students and staff members? Essentially what we wanted was an explanation of the students "perspective" which may be defined as "an ordered view of one's world; what is taken for granted about the attributes of various objects, events and human nature. It is an order of things remembered and expected as well as actually perceived, an organized conception of what is plausible and what is possible."[3] The term perspective then includes both behavior and beliefs about that behavior.

These were all one-of-a-kind descriptive studies. The schools and students were not randomly selected, but in field studies of this type, one goes where the phenomenon he wishes to study exists, and where one can gain access. We do not regard this as a disability. We feel that such studies are valuable; first because the descriptions are interesting and instructive, and second, because it is from such studies that concepts and hypotheses can be generated. In addition, there is a definite "sameness" among comprehensive, secondary schools with their largeness, standard periods, batch processing, and teacher specialists which makes the findings from a few schools at least somewhat generalizable:

> The researcher who generates theory need not combine random sampling with theoretical sampling when setting forth relationships among categories and properties. The relationships are suggested as hypotheses pertinent to direction of relationships, not tested as descriptions of both direction and magnitude. Conventional theorizing claims generality of scope, that is, one assumes that if the relationship holds for one group under certain conditions, it will probably hold for other groups

under the same conditions.[4]

In three schools which we investigated, students did carry on the same kind of activities and did respond in remarkedly similar fashion to the demands of the environment.

In discussing these four studies, we want to describe the behavior of the students in the first three studies (Cusick's, Ayling's and Palonsky's) which all took place in comprehensive schools, and then juxtapose that description to the behavior of the students in Martin's study, which, while undertaken in a comprehensive school, focused on sixty students in an alternative program within that school.

THE STUDENTS' BEHAVIOR

What we considered to be our major finding in all three comprehensive schools was that the students spent most of their school time, and probably much of their adolescent energy, hanging around with one another in small, informal groups that were narrowly bounded by age, class, sex, interests and activities. This was true in the first study which was undertaken in a rural suburban school of 1,100 tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders with a seven period day with 50 minute classes. It also occurred in the second study undertaken in a 2,000 student, 30% black, urban school located in a deteriorating section of an industrial city. And it was true in the third school which was urban and multi-ethnic like the second, but had been structured to include a number of curricular innovations. In all three schools, not only did the students hang around together in their discrete groups for a large part of the day, but it also seemed that the schools were structured in such a way as to encourage students to make their informal group the center of their school activity. The first and second schools had a standard six or seven period day including cafeteria and study halls and some time for homeroom sessions. In both schools, the students spent a large amount of time going to and coming from classes and hanging

around the home-room, halls and cafeteria.

> Consider just the first thirty-five or forty minutes of the morning, add the thirty-five for the total day devoted to passing in the halls, the additional forty minutes devoted to lunch, the time spent in getting ready in each of the classes, a conservative estimate of which would be at least five minutes, add five minutes more for the time taken out of class for most passing of paper, books, worksheets, or directions. Add at least half of a study hall period in which something other than academic activity is taking place and judging from the observed study halls, that too is a conservative estimate. Add an additional period when a student is engaged in something other than academic activity, that is time spent with administrators, counselors, nurses, activities, looking for someone or going somewhere, the total is 200 minutes a day or even three hours of the total time spent in school in which any single student can be expected to either spend his own time on procedural or maintenance details or wait while others tie up the class with their own.[5]

During these times the students were free to engage in their informal groups, and that is what we found them doing.

The third study by Palonsky was conducted in a somewhat different setting. In the interest of creating a "new" and more student-oriented curriculum, the staff had organized the school around the flexible-modular pattern, had left large blocks of time free and had developed very liberal attendance policies. The intent of the reorganization was to encourage the students to make use of their free time to take advantage of the staff-run learning options and develop their personal learning interests. But it did not work. A considerable number of students did not attend class and used that time and their unstructured time in their personal associations. As one student told Palonsky: "As I see it, the structured days are the school's time and the modular days are my time, I'm hip to that, I go to class on structured days but on my time I do as I please, I never get high on the school's time, but today's my time and I'm ripped."[6]

This attitude among the students seemed to dominate the school to an extent that the staff, or some of the staff and administrators, found unacceptable. In

the middle of that year, most of the innovations were abandoned in favor of a more traditional five period day, five day week with mandatory attendance at class.

A related finding is that not only did the organizational patterns in all three schools provide time for students to hang around, but also that in classes, even during the formal instruction, there were considerable blocks of time in which students literally had nothing to do, and during that time they slipped into their informal interactions. We attributed this to three basic assumptions around which the classes were organized: (1) that knowledge is compartmentalized, (2) that teachers are subject matter specialists in these various compartments, and (3) that the ideal way to pass on knowledge is to place chirty or so students in a room with a teaching specialist and have that specialist verbalize the intricacies of the specialty. When these assumptions were operationalized, the result was that the teachers did most or almost all of what there was to do, the talking, inquiring and gesticulating, and this reduced the amount of activity available for students. Indeed, student involvement was discouraged except where students were reacting to the teachers. Furthermore, student involvement was usually singular with one student interacting with the teacher while the others observed the interaction. The teachers seemed to spend more energy supervising the 24 or so observers than in interacting with the single respondent. This whole process demanded a large amount of teacher attention to maintenance and supervisory matters which detracted from the instructional processes and exaggrated the importance of compliance with maintenance demands for the students.

For most of the school day then, as we saw it, students were in a not unpleasant situation. They were in the company of their friends and had large amounts of time when they were expected to do little other than "be there." During this time, the students carried on their group activities. Some groups spent their time discussing

motorcycles, sports, the opposite sex, getting high or planning to get high, and a few, as Cusick found, spent their school time planning larcenous activities. In all the studies, there were only a few students involved in school activities. At first we wondered why, but we concluded that their activities attracted few because there was so little to do in these "student activities." Those involved might have a bake sale, sell tee shirts, have a car wash, or plan a dance, but those events demanded no serious involvement or effort. In fact, other than the initial planning of the event or fund raising project, such activities seemed only to provide another opportunity for the "hanging around with one's friends" that we found everywhere else in the schools.

There is some question about the degree of importance given by the groups to academic achievement. In Cusick's initial study, he found that the students went out of their way to avoid discussing any learning-related matter, i.e., teachers, papers, books, or related topics. On occasion they would remind one another of the date some assignment was due or how many pages it had to be, but there were never any comments dealing with substance. However, Cusick and Ayling found some groups of girls and some groups of boys and girls that did occasionally talk about their classes and the books they were reading. Palonsky found the same thing. Some students did make their classroom activities the subject of their groups interaction, but it would seem that there were few student groups that were centered around the academic interests of the school.

Of course we did find students engaged in serious matters. In Cusick's initial study undertaken in 1970, there were a number of students interested in the attempts to get the U.S. out of Vietnam, and Cusick and Ayling found many black students involved in racial politics. Palonsky found some student groups spent their time analyzing individual members' lives. But these issues, however serious in a political or intellectual way, were only marginally related to school

activities or requirements. To the extent that they were related, it was a matter of one or two teachers expressing sympathy and support for the politics or the self-analysis.

In sum, our argument is that the comprehensive high school's organization structure with its emphasis on teacher initiated action, its routine, batch processing and reliance on maintenance procedures combine to provide a large amount of school time when students are required to do little other than be in attendance and minimally compliant. They use this "free" time to carry on their group activities and those group activities seem to consume well over half their school day. It was also stated that the groups were discrete but it should be noted that it is not only the organizational structure that keeps the groups distinct and the student body fragmented. In the first three studies, the schools were all comprehensive high schools and all served students from various and varied neighborhoods and even from different townships. For instance, in the second and third study, both of which took place in urban areas, some of the families in the schools attendance area were quite wealthy, some were middle income, and a great many were poor, even quite poor. The various residential pockets were divided by major thoroughfares, super highways, rivers, and a number of open spaces, among them cemetaries and playgrounds. And, of course, there were many non-residential enclaves with their factories, warehouses, and commercial complexes. Even in the first study, where the economic differences among the families were small, the students came from three distinct and distant townships. Thus, the schools were faced with the problem of creating some sense of unity among a diverse and transient population. In all three schools, the administrators expressed a strong feeling of discouragement at their inability to do this.

Another factor to consider is racial mix. Both Cusick and Ayling, and Palonsky selected schools which were biracial with the goal of exploring what black and white

students did together. Although all of us taught for some years in urban schools, as researchers, we were all surprised at the simplicity of the answer. They did not do anything together; nothing except in very "safe" situations. We define a "safe" situation as one where there was an involving activity in which all students could engage as equals and in which a teacher-supervisor maintained strong central control over the activity. An example of this would be football or some other demanding team sport, or some particular class where the material and the teacher's style were as stated. Otherwise, there was nothing in the way of interaction among the blacks and whites. But within both races, the students carried on similar group activities in the school.

There is an additional element dividing students which was suggested by the descriptions gathered from the second study (Cusick and Ayling's). In that study, a considerable amount of time was spent watching the black students attempt to form a union and on the basis of those observations, it was suggested that the blacks were severely divided by their inability to gather consensus among themselves on how to behave toward the "white dominated" institution. Some males derided the females for trying to lead the black union, females derided some of the more militant males for "diggin white chicks on the side," and many simply laughed at the idea of creating a political action base in the school. It was there that we first observed the strong class difference among the black students just as we had always noticed among the white students. These class and color biases among the students served to further fragment the student population in the schools.

In sum, the combined data from three, descriptive studies of adolescent behavior in secondary schools suggests that the student population is severely divided into small, discrete groups, the goals of which have little to do with the formal goals of the schools. It is suggested that the organizational structure of those schools is such that it encourages that behavior.

THE EFFECTS OF THE STUDENTS BEHAVIOR ON THE SCHOOLS' ORGANIZATION

We stated that the relationships between the students' behavior and the organization were reciprocal. The question to be addressed now is: "What does it mean for the school organization that its students spend a great part of their day hanging around together in discrete groups, the goals of which have little to do with the formal goals of the school?" We would suggest that it means that the comprehensive secondary schools in which we studied students' behavior have organizations with a "low level of existence."

Schools are complex organizations. That means that (1) the participants are divided into sets of differentiated tasks, and (2) the number of people working in the organization is such that they cannot be in face-to-face contact with one another all the time. Instead of personal contact, the members are tied together by either common activities or common adherence to some set of abstract principles or norms. For instance, we rarely see and interact with the presidents of our institutions, but we feel that we are engaged in related activities and both we and the presidents give allegiance to some common educational goals. The relationship between us and the presidents is secondary rather than primary with our common activities and ideals serving to substitute for personal interaction. But in the secondary schools which were studied and described briefly, both common activities and common ideals among the participants were lacking. The students were divided into groups; the groups did not interact or carry on common activities nor were there any common goals toward which these groups were oriented. One might say that hanging around was a common activity and killing time a common goal, but that does not suffice since the end of both the activity and the goal is such that it kept students apart, and it did not have anything to do with the learning goals of the organization. In sum, while the term "organization" implies cooperative activities and a sense of shared beliefs among participants, among the students we observed there was little of

either; and for those reasons we suggest that the school organizations had "low levels of existence."

This means that as organizations, they (1) lack vitality, (2) had only limited ability to control or change the behavior that goes on inside them and (3) were unable to recognize and admit diversity or conflict, and instead were forced to resort to a uniformity imposed by authoritarian control. To say that the schools lacked vitality is to say that they resembled a "department store on Saturday afternoon," which contains an aggregate of individuals who have some generally similar purpose for coming under the same roof, and while there tacitly agree to maintain some kind of order but do not form among themselves any internal organization, cohesiveness or communal attitude. It might be very well for a school to have a "department store on Saturday" type of organization. After all, education can be considered an individually obtained product. But there are some problems with that lack of community. Specifically, the staff of "department store" type organizations may have great difficulty achieving more than minimal control over the behavior of the organization's members and may have great difficulty changing that behavior.

An assumption often made by those who speak of changing organizations and changing behavior and outcomes in organizations is that if one wishes to do so, he should change the organizational structure. But that makes sense only if the people in that organization are closely attuned to the formal goals of the institution. But that was not the case with those students, and hence the attempts by teachers and administrators to change or control their behavior attained only very limited success and, in some cases, were doomed to outright failure. Curricular and scheduling changes, staffing and administrative alterations, and other changes made with the intent of improving the educational processes, i.e., increasing student interest in learning, decreasing apathy and insolence, had no impact. These changes

in organizational structure could have succeeded in the sense of touching the students of the students identified with organizational goals, but they did not except at a minimal or maintenance level. An example of this was in Inside High School. Cusick described an attempt to develop a humanities program which would give the students a broader based learning experience by integrating some formerly discrete specialities, i.e. music, English, social studies and art, into the general area of humanities. The students were given some free choice about their activities and additional free time to develop their interests in various offerings with the expectation that they would form into working units and pursue projects. But what they did with the free time was retreat into their already extant groups and carry on their usual group activities talking about sports, the opposite sex, cars, or whatever they were interested in. The experiment did not work. It was assumed that the students had internalized the same goals and aspirations as the staff, and could be relied upon to work out their own paths toward the realization of those goals. But the students did not share those values, they were still maintaining other non-academic goals, and when given the opportunity they went off to pursue them. In doing so, they subverted the intent of the "improvements." Of course not all the students behaved in the way we described. Yet a sufficient number did so that the staff felt forced to retreat from the alteration in the structure. Therefore, while the "department store on Saturday" type of organization may not be bad -- the fact that the students were not attuned to common goals and aspirations and that there were many groups in the school with diverse goals and behavior severely limited the power of the officials in the organization to either control or change the behavior of the students or subsequently to pursue policies which might improve the educational processes.

The third implication of the term "low level of existence" is that an organization

may be unable to admit diversity and conflict among its participants and may be forced to resort to a uniformity imposed by authoritarian control. From observations, the school studied by Palonsky faced an organizational dilemma. According to their own survey, 85% of the students responded "yes" to a question which asked if they thought "the modular system has more advantages than disadvantages." Yet 39% of the students received one or more failing grades during the time the survey was taken and this was nearly double the failure rate of the city's three other high schools. The school's principal claimed that the flexible modular system was "just not working." He believed that the school had to be "accountable" for all of the students, and with 30% of the students receiving one or more failing grades during each period, clearly the school was not serving its students.

Another troublesome fact was the cut rate. First, the school data indicated that students were absent more frequently on days of structured classes than during days of unstructured classes. Secondly, the cut rate for some classes differed considerably from the mean cut rate of their sample. Students were absent from physics at a rate of 6.8% on structured days and only 1% on unstructured days when the mean cut rate of their sample was almost 26%. Students cut American government at the rate of 24.1% on structured days and 51.5% on unstructured days. The school's data suggest that several courses were significantly above the mean for student absence and several were significantly below. Students attended physics, economics, geometry and the secretarial and residential construction vocational blocks with great regularity, but cut almost 50% of their life science classes, over 34% of advanced metals classes and almost 38% of their government classes. The logical question to ask was "why does this occur?" Was it the schedule, the teachers, the curriculum, or the students enrolled in those classes? If the school wanted to address these questions, it had to admit that some classes were better than others

and of course, some students more motivated. But the school had no mechanisms to address problems of ineffective teaching and it could not accept some students rejecting all classes, or others choosing to attend some while regularly cutting others. The diversity offered by the school's innovative experiments revealed problems that could not be solved, so the school chose to cover them with a uniformity imposed by administrative control. They dropped the flexible-modular schedule, turned to a five period-day-five day week, imposed a mandatory attendance policy and eliminated many of the individual learning options.

We want to emphasize that we are not "blaming" the administrators or staff for imposing control on the diverse and divided school population. In fact, we think that often those administrators have no choice. The outstanding example of this was observed by Cusick and Ayling at Central High. There administrators maintained a very repressive structure, and when the students wanted something, the administrators usually refused. We suggested that this occurred because there was no consensual basis among the participants in the school and the potential conflicts among the groups, which were divided by race, class and group activity, were such that the administrators feared leaving the students alone or even trying to get them together. The students were allowed no power, they were kept going to and from classes, the classes were 57 minutes long with only five minutes inbetween, the cafeteria period was eliminated, there were no study or activity periods, and school functions, such as dances and parties, were rare. It seemed that the total organization was geared to keeping students apart. "If there is any question, I find it best to say 'no' " was the way the principal put it. Because of the history of racial trouble in the school and in the city, this school may have been an exaggerated example, but certainly other urban schools with similar histories and similar actions by administrators are not uncommon. These schools have only limited means to deal with the conflict in them. As Cosar points out, it is not the conflict that is bad, but the

lack of ameliorating elements.

> A social structure in which there can exist a multiplicity of conflicts contains a mechanism for bringing together otherwise isolated, apathetic, or mutually hostile parties and for taking them into the field of public activities. Moreover, such a structure fosters a multiplicity of associations and coalitions whose diverse purposes criss-cross each other, we recall, thereby preventing alliances along one major line of cleavage.[7]

But this is not a description of Central High. While there was a "multiplicity of conflicts," there was no "mechanism for bringing together otherwise isolated, apathetic, or mutually hostile parties." It had no effective way to deal with the diversity and conflict inside its walls. Therefore the burden of keeping the 2,000 students together in some semblance of order rested with administrators, and of course they used the means at their disposal; control and uniformity.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND AN ALTERNATIVE ORGANIZATION

The purpose of this paper is to describe the behavior of students we observed in some comprehensive high schools and to explore the reciprocal relationships between that behavior and the schools' organization. In the interest of pursuing these purposes, we want to discuss the findings of Martin's study which was undertaken in a genuinely "different" environment and which provides an interesting contrast to the data from the comprehensive schools. The study was undertaken in a traditional school which drew its students from a community characterized by wide economic differences. Within that school, he examined a special curriculum program for sixty students which was a subunit of the total organization and which had students and teachers physically and organizationally separated from the rest of the school.

The program had been initiated by staff who felt that the school had little control over a sizable number of students who repeatedly engaged in vandalism or aggression or who were simply apathetic. Over five years, it had evolved into a program for a variety of juniors and seniors, "some with school-defined problems, some without school defined problems."

The staff of three did not share a number of assumptions which characterize many secondary schools. Perhaps most important, they did not assume that students shared the same values about schooling as did the teachers and administrators. They believed that the role of student in most schools requires passivity and spectatorship, gave students little to do, relied greatly on second-hand experience, and demanded or allowed little real responsibility. Additionally, they assumed that peer group pressure and social relationships among the students strongly influenced how they perceived school, how they behaved while there, and how much value they ascribed to school activities.

Building upon their assumptions, the program they designed adopted a variety of strategies designed to form a new social group composed of both teachers and students. It was the purpose of the group to develop a reward system and a system of normative behavior which valued high student involvement and academic achievement. In order to encourage the formation of the group and at the same time carry on the academic goals of the larger school, the staff and students initiated a set of periodic "learning expeditions" in which the entire group would spend a week, intermittently through the year, backpacking, camping, or canoeing. During and before each trip, the students conducted field studies in history and science and wrote research papers and poetry connected with the direct first-hand experiences gained on the trip. Preparation for the expeditions were made by all the students and teachers, and the planning and organizing tasks proved sufficiently complex so that the involvement of almost all students was needed. To have the trips function smoothly, a high degree of face-to-face communication between students and staff was necessary. The natural conflict which occurred when students of differing communities and values were forced to reach consensus was resolved by confrontation and negotiation. These were lengthy processes, but ones which the staff believed to be an important part of the curriculum. The students did begin to control each

other, a phenomenon not found in the other schools studied. Class cutting became much lower that the rest of the school and disciplinary problems virtually disappeared. We suggest it was the process of negotiating which formed the norms and created peer group pressure which reduced the incidence of student behavior threatening to the group's existence.

The staff needed to rely neither upon rules and regulations nor on administrative power to gain student compliance. Rather, they maintained control by assuming positions of informal leadership within the entire group. Martin concluded that their leadership was due to a number of factors, including their maturity, dedication to group goals, and ability to mediate conflict within the group. The staff was able to encourage the formation of the group and to use its power to modify and influence the behavior of its members. In some cases, membership in the program became more important that membership in the other groups that the students belonged to prior to entering the program. As one boy explained, "Most of my friends from last year were into pulling false alarms and putting cherry bombs down the toilets. I was too. I don't see them anymore. They're still into those things, but I'm not anymore. I'm into writing poetry."

In this school the burden of the organization rested not on administrative control or forced uniformity, but on continually developing consensus among staff and students and students and students. Hence the organization possessed a "high level of existence."

A number of organizational characteristics contributed to the success of this program as an organization. (1) There was face-to-face interaction among all of the participants in the program. (2) There was a commonness of purpose and activity which evolved throughout the interactions. (3) There was a high degree of freedom from the standard rules, regulations, time schedules, and even from the building.

Students, in their pursuit of diverse activities, were given a large measure of freedom to come and go as they pleased. (4) The staff of three was willing to devote a great deal of time and attention to the processes of forming a group, time outside the normal school day and time within the normal school day which, in other schools, would have been spent in more traditional teaching activities.

In sum, this subunit within an otherwise normal high school attained a high degree of existence which allowed it to tolerate diversity and still hold together, to substitute internal cohesion for external control, and apparently to increase student involvement in school activities. The question of whether this organization had more control over student behavior is difficult to assess. Since the students were allowed more freedom of activity, and their environment was expanded to allow more opportunities to leave the school building, the whole question of controlling student behavior became one negotiated between student and teacher and student and students, rather than one imposed by administrators and teachers on students. Students took on the task of controlling themselves.

Martin had no way to assess black-white relationships as there were no black students in that particular program. However, there is evidence that a similar program carried on in an inner-city biracial school was quite successful in gaining cooperation between black and white students. From 1967 to 1969, one of us, Ayling, was in charge of a special school for high dropouts. The program he organized for fifty students was quite similar in intent, structure, and, to some degree, activities to the program studied by Martin. And with an enrollment of 25 black students and 25 white students, it appeared that biracial cooperation among the students was high, and the racial animosity in the program was almost non-existent.[8]

Let us tentatively suggest that the organizational structure and some of the student behavior extant in Martin's program was desirable, and let us conclude the

paper by addressing ourselves to the question of whether that organizational structure and student behavior might be duplicated in the comprehensive schools such as those studies by Cusick, Ayling, and Palonsky. We admit that to many teachers, administrators, and parents, the activities occurring in that school may not be desirable. The large amount of time spent by students discussing their activities and their year-long, intermittent discussion on their own internal group processes will strike many as irrelevant to the real business of the school. But, at the same time, it would appear that these schools did have a "high level of existence," and as such did not have some organizational disadvantages that were inherent in the larger and more traditional schools we observed.

Our question, therefore, is "Could the larger and more traditional schools that we studied adopt the organizational structure of Martin's program and thereby raise their own level of existence?" In our opinion, the answer is "no." The changes required to effect those ends are such that the entire concept of the traditional comprehensive school would be destroyed. First of all, the large schools which we studied, 1,100 students, 1,350 students, and 2,000 students, would have to be divided into smaller units where the participants of those units would be in frequent, if not constant, contact with one another. This would, in effect, force students to break up the informal groups with which they entered the school and adopt the learning unit as an informal as well as a formal referent group. Second, it would require that the students take an active role in decisions about the content of their education because those discussions would form the basis of the interaction among the students in the learning unit. That would mean large amounts of in-school time would have to be given to student discussions of curricular matters. Students wishes and suggestions about the curriculum content would have to be seriously considered. In addition, there would have to be large numbers of teachers willing to place themselves on an almost equal footing with their students. The teachers in

Martin's study were occasionally out-voted by the students, their opinions occasionally refuted and their judgment openly questioned. And perhaps most important, the community and board of education of a district would have to be able to tolerate a high degree of diversity in the system. If the students in Martin's study wanted to raise money for a trip to New York, they did so without being questioned. Many communities could tolerate a relatively small number of students, 20 to 60, engage in such diverse activities, especially if those particular students have had difficulty in the regular school. But it is unlikely that communities could tolerate the whole school population engaged in such activities. In sum, while both staff and students of comprehensive secondary schools are burdened with a structure which creates decided disadvantages, the implications of Martin's study indicate that the steps necessary to eliminate those disadvantages are probably too radical for widespread adoption.

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~~Footnotes~~

[1]See Coleman, James and others, Youth: Transition to Adulthood, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1974.

[2]Cusick, Philip A., Inside High School, New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1973.

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[3]Jerome Manis & Bernard Meltzer, eds, Symbolic Interaction (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1967), p. 161.

[4]Bernard Glaser & Anselm Straus, "Theoritical Sampling," in Norman K. Denzin, ed., Sociological Methods (Aldine Publishing Co., 1970), pp. 105-106

[5]~~Cusick, ibid, pp. 48-49.~~ 48-44 עמ', ר"ק, Cusick .5

[6]Palonsky, ibid, p. 85. 85 עמ', ר"ק, Palonsky .6

[7]Cosar, Lewis, The Function of Social Conflict, New York, The Free Press, 1966, p. 155.

~~Cosar, ibid, p. 156.~~ 156 עמ', ר"ק, Cosar

[8]Docking, Robert, "A Descriptive and Evaluative Study of a Secondary School Dropout Program," Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Michigan State University, 1969.